



Orders & Medals Research Society
Sussex Branch Newsletter No 19 2012

Welcome and Happy New Year!

This newsletter comes to you from your local branch of the Orders and Medals Research Society.

Throughout the year the Sussex branch maintains a lively programme of talks, organises a battlefield trip, museum visits and hosts an annual dinner. Meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month at The Castle Inn Hotel, Bramber starting at 7:30pm for a drink before the meeting begins at 7:45pm. There is plenty of parking behind the hotel and across the road in the public car park.

BRANCH AGM

The Annual General Meeting for the Sussex Branch OMRS was held on 13th December, 2011 at the Castle Inn Hotel, Bramber.

The main news is that as previously advertised the Chairman and Secretary intended to stand down. The new Chairman is David Slade and the new Secretary is Jeff McKenna. We wish David and Jeff well in their new roles and thank them for volunteering and bringing their experience to the Branch.

Roy and Meurig will continue to serve on the Committee. Peter Rudwick continues as Treasurer.

--- 2012 Speakers Programme ---

January 31	Member's Own	
February 28	The River Kwai	Kevin Patience
March 27	5 brothers in WW1	Gary Cooper
April 24	Ashantee 1873-74	Chris Hill
May 29	<i>tba</i>	David Slade
June 26	<i>tba</i>	
July 31	<i>tba</i>	
August 21	Member's Own	
September 27	'The Memories of an 'Erk'	Ted Jones
October 25		Edwin Weekes
November 29	Kashmir - 65 years of conflict on the roof of the world <i>tba</i>	Nik Grundstrom Jeff McKenna
December 20	A.G.M., Quiz, Raffle & Social Evening	

What's On:

Draw Your Weapons: the Art of Commando Comics is at the National Army Museum from September 1 to April 30 2012.

Shoreham Fort (<http://www.shorehamfort.co.uk>)

5th February – Volunteer Day and Guided Tours 10:30 and 16:30

19th February - Volunteer Day and Guided Tours 10:30 and 17:00

10th June – Military History Day and Cannon Firing 10:30 and 17:30

For further information on the Branch please contact the Secretary:
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Newsletter editor: Mr Meurig Jones meurig@casus-belli.co.uk



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The Dunkirk Little Ships Restoration Trust (DLSRT) has received a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant of £314,000 to restore the steam tug *Challenge*. The *Challenge*, built in 1931 in Aberdeen, has been based at Shoreham Harbour since 2006. The tug was rescued from the scrap heap by the DLSRT in 1993 and restored to working order. The recent grant was sought to pay a £1 million bill to replace the boiler and other remedial work. See www.stchallenge.org and www.dlsrt.org.uk.



I have made enquiries to the DLSRT about the possibility of a guided tour – it is and I am awaiting further news.



Calpe's bell lives on

YOUR story about the Dieppe Raid in 1942 (*Trophy Lives*, August) brought my attention to HMS Calpe which was the flagship.

Readers may be interested to know that her bell has been a part of Littlehampton Lifeboat Station for some 40 years.

It is proudly displayed with a photograph of HMS Calpe and a record of services.

Visitors to the Lifeboat Station always show a keen interest.

– David Woolven,
Littlehampton Lifeboat Crew
1968-88, Littlehampton,
West Sussex

HMS Shoreham (M112) a Sandown class mine hunter visited her namesake port in November to exercise the freedom of the town granted to her in March 2011. Sailors, marines and soldiers marched through the town with bayonets fixed. HMS Shoreham is commanded by Lieutenant Commander Sarah West who is going on to command the Type 23 frigate HMS Portland in April 2012, the first woman to command a Royal Navy warship. HMS Shoreham is due in the Gulf on active operations.

The current HMS Shoreham, built of glass reinforced plastic, is the fourth ship to carry the name which carries four battle honours, all from WWII: East Indies 1940, Sicily 1943, Mediterranean 1943 and Burma 1944-45.

HMS Shoreham:

1694 24 gun 5th rate built at Shoreham, re-built Woolwich 1720 20 gun 6th rate sold 1744.

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1744 24 gun 6th rate built at Hull sold 1758

1931 escort sloop built at Chatham Dockyard. Apart from a short spell in the Mediterranean she spent her time in the Indian Ocean. Sold off 1946 for merchant service, scrapped 1950.

2001 Sandown Class mine hunter built at Vosper-Thorneycroft. In service.

A fifth HMS Shoreham was re-named while under construction, launched in 1919 as HMS Salford.

Heil Scouser!

In the Daily Mail on 26th November, there was a feature on Adolf Hitler, describing how he spent five months in Liverpool, wandering around the city and relaxing in the Poste House pub, pint in hand.

The article also described how he enjoyed a sightseeing tour of London and was fascinated by Tower Bridge.

The claims come from an author exploring a long-held theory that the 23-year-old Hitler shared a flat with his married half-brother Alois, from November 1912 to April 1913.

The author Mike Unger's claims came under scrutiny in a documentary on BBC North West on 28th November, where Unger and Professor Frank McDonough argued over the evidence.

Professor McDonough stated that rather than idling around Liverpool, there is evidence that Hitler was actually in Vienna during those five months. In his book, Unger claims the future Fuhrer fled to Liverpool from Vienna, to avoid National Service.

Unger's claims are based around the memoirs written in the 1930s by Hitler's sister-in-law, Bridget Hitler [Alois' wife], entitled 'My Brother-in-Law Adolf'. Bridget, using her maiden name of Dowling, tried to cash in on Hitler's notoriety, by writing about her marriage to Alois Hitler and the subsequent visit of her brother-in-law to their flat in Toxteth. As the visit lengthened, relations between the two brothers became strained, to the point when in April 1913, Alois allegedly bought Adolf a ticket to Germany and put him on the train!

Hopefully, the documentary will be screened in the south-east, so we can draw our own conclusions - was the Fuhrer a secret Scouser?!

Peter Rudwick



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News from the Front

The Queens Own Royal West Kent Living History Group is restoring a rare WWI water cart. One of their members spotted the cart for sale on eBay. The Group have been given £3000 by Southern Water and South East Water towards the restoration cost. www.queensown.com

In November it was widely reported that in 1918 the French were building a “dummy” city of Paris to fool German bombers. Built to the north of Paris on a stretch of the Seine similar to that which runs through Paris an elaborate street plan complete with lights and replica buildings was planned. This elaborate ruse was never tested as the last German raid was in September 1918 before the fake city was complete.

In December 45,000 citizens of Koblenz (nearly half the population) were evacuated during an operation to remove an unexploded two ton RAF “Blockbuster” bomb discovered in the Rhine. The evacuation included two hospitals, seven nursing homes and a prison. The bomb was successfully defused in a three hour operation, a smaller 275lb American bomb lying alongside was also dealt with. Koblenz was a target during WWII and 87% of the city was destroyed. The low levels of the Rhine have revealed three other unexploded bombs so far.

December 7th, 2011 was the 70th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbour. The anniversary is commemorated in Pearl Harbour, but with a new feature. In recent years survivors of that 'day of infamy' have stipulated in their wills that their ashes are interred on one of the warships lost that day to be re-united with their comrades who died. December 10th was the 70th anniversary of the loss of the British warships HMS Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales (the capital ships in Force Z) off Singapore. In the space of three days the Japanese had gained control of the Pacific.

A memorial to those lost on the Repulse and Prince of Wales has been unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire by the Force Z Survivors Association.

Since May 2010 the fourth plinth at Trafalgar Square has been occupied by a very large ship in a bottle, HMS Victory no less. Made by the Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare MBE, the model is 1/30th scale complete with 80 cannon and 37 sails set as they were for the Battle of Trafalgar. The sails are made with designs inspired by Indonesian batik cloth which neatly reflects the purpose of Nelsons navy which was to secure international commerce for the British Empire. The model will be removed at the end of this year and sold, possibly to a private collector. The National Maritime Museum is seeking to raise £362,000 to support the purchase of this unique art work.

A tree in Harare, Zimbabwe said to have been used to hang Matabele fighters in 1898 by white settlers was recently knocked down by a truck. Locals say it is a bad omen.



Gunner AP Sullivan AIF VC

I spotted this plaque on a trip to London this summer to watch the Trooping of the Colour. I was intrigued by how Gnr Sullivan came to die at the 1937 Coronation. Arthur Percy Sullivan was born in 1876 in Australia. He enlisted in April 1918 drafted into the Artillery and arrived in Europe as the war was ending, he saw no action. However, troops were need for the war in Russia and in 1919 Sullivan was discharged from the AIF and enlisted into the 45th bn Royal Fusiliers with the rank of Corporal. On 10 August 1919 the 45th bn successfully attacked the Bolsheviks, retiring from the attack Sullivan's platoon was cut off and had to fight their way back. They came to the Sheika River across which was a single plank bridge. An officer and three men fell men in, Sullivan jumped in the river and rescued all four men singly while under aimed fire from the Bolsheviks who were just 100 yards away. Sullivan, known as the 'shy VC', returned to Australia rather than go to Buckingham Palace to receive his VC from the King. He was presented with his VC in 1920 by the Prince of Wales.



In 1937 Sullivan was in London for the Coronation billeted at Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk. On 9 April he was returning to barracks when he missed his footing and fell cracking his head on the kerb. He died in hospital from head injuries. Sullivan was cremated with full military honours, his ashes were returned to Australia. The plaque was erected in 1939. His widow, who died in 1980, donated his VC to the Australian War Memorial.

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